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ABSTRACT

This manual is designed to help teachers and tutors implement a 4-day modular course in the skills and processes necessary to get things done. The aims and content of the course are described. A course summary is provided along with a model course program that includes parallel lists of objectives, suggested learning activities and text materials, and notes for tutors. Instructional materials are provided to help students develop leadership, observation, evaluation, problem-solving, listening, and target-setting skills. Follow-up procedures for use in applying and reinforcing the skills addressed in the course are outlined. Concluding the guide is a chapter on student evaluation. Appendixes to the manual include a summary of the development and initial results of the course, a brief list of the skills that employers value in young people, a sample letter to employers or sponsors, and a checklist for a successful course. (MN)

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An Occasional Paper

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GETTING THINGS DONE

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GETTING THINGS DONE

A learning package for process skills

Max Taylor

FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT

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Dear Sir/Madam

GETTING THINGS DONE

Attached is a short manual for tutors, and others, based on work commissioned by the FEU from Max Taylor, a training consultant.

It is in fact a short modular course, structured over 4 days, where young people are put into a situation of learning by doing. Throughout the document the importance of processes and relationships is stressed and in Appendix 1 the tutors who assisted in the development of the course, testify to its success in this respect.

This manual is meant to be used as a resource of ideas rather than a model to be uncritically replicated. It should be useful to tutors who are organising residential activities, and to those who are concerned with training for personal effectiveness.

The FEU would like to see more colleges test the structure and ideas contained in this. The Introduction particularly identifies a need for vocational teachers to use its ideas in their subject teaching. It also relates usefully to many aims of the CPVE core.

Maggie Chadwick at the FEU is willing to receive and collate reactions to this document and, where possible, to advise.

In the meantime it makes an interesting addition to the efforts of those who are grappling with the problems of organising the learning of process skills.

Yours faithfully

Jack Mansell

JACK MANSELL
Chief Officer

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CONTENTS

		Page
INTRODUCTION		1
Part 1 -	Aims and Content	3
Part 2 -	A Summary of the Course	4
Part 3 -	Model Course Programme	10
Part 4 -	Running the Course	32
Part 5 -	Content of the Course	45
Part 6 -	Follow Up: Applying and Reinforcing the Course	62
Part 7 -	Evaluation	67
APPENDIX 1	Development of the Course and First Results	70
APPENDIX 2	What Employers Value in Young People	74
APPENDIX 3	Letter to Employer or Sponsor	75
CHECK-LIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL COURSE		77

INTRODUCTION

i) What follows is a short manual for teachers on how to run a course for young people in the skills and processes necessary to get things done.

ii) The course, and manual, have been designed by Max Taylor, a training consultant. It was trial-tested in two further education colleges and an appraisal of the usefulness of the course by the staff and students involved will be found in Appendix 1.

iii) There is general agreement that although classroom-based learning can be effective in the transmission of knowledge, the understanding of principles and the stimulation of the intellect, it is not always suitable for inculcating an awareness of the skills, attitudes and experiences necessary in working with others in a common endeavour. The FEU has suggested elsewhere[1] that 'skills' should be broadly defined and assessed and the learning of them should, wherever possible, be activity based. Specific vocational courses invariably have practical activities as part of their design, in more general and academic courses such time is less likely to be included. In vocational preparation courses, such as YTS, CPVE, etc., experiential learning is promoted as a desirable strategy, but tutors often lack guidance with respect to the operation of that type of learning. Experience without planning, goals and self-appraisal is rarely productive.

iv) What Max Taylor has done in this document is to provide an exemplar in experiential learning by way of a short course framework around the theme of getting things done by working with others. Suggestions are made with respect to desirable modes of operation, accommodation, timetabling, staffing, etc., but quite obviously colleges and tutors will have to adjust these in the light of local conditions.

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1 Basic Skills FEU November 1982

v) The suggested framework is a four-day course, preferably though not necessarily residential; each day has a main theme, but the detailed guidance makes it clear that it is the working together and self-appraisal by the young people themselves in the debriefing sessions that are the vital processes of this course. The level of guidance for individual tutors may be too specific for some, but welcome to others. Much the same applies to the guidance related to the assessment of targets.

vi) The tasks involved as the focal points of all this activity may or may not be vocationally specific. In this document they are generic: designing posters and displays; surveys; inventing things; performing. Throughout the document the author stresses that the processes and relationships experienced are more important than the quality of the products. In the world of work, however, processes, relationships and product quality are all important and the challenge of this document is the extent to which vocational teachers can use its ideas in their own subject teaching. This will require their involvement. The FEU is among those who have constantly criticised the further education system for being too preoccupied with content and product; and there is increasing evidence to show that the skills and competencies associated with processes are more generic and are likely to be more transferable. Max Taylor goes beyond this, to the extent where his processes are almost content-free; and for some there remains some uncertainty as to the value of such processes. The real test of this document is, therefore, how students can transfer successfully what they have learned from this course into life generally and into the larger curriculum framework of general and vocational education, and the extent to which tutors can support them.

Jack Mansell

PART 1 - AIMS AND CONTENT

Aims

1.1 The purpose of the course is to develop the skills of co-operation and 'getting things done'. These include:

- o understanding why a task is being done
- o working in a methodical way - using a simple work-system called 'Tackle a Task'.
- o checking the task is finished
- o reviewing, in order to learn from the experience
- o listening - and speaking up when needed
- o observing and noticing detail appreciating one's
- o own and other people's skills
- o judging one's effect on other people.

Some other 'themes', which are given less emphasis, are:

- o leadership
- o commitment
- o problem solving
- o setting targets
- o breaking assumptions.

How to Use This Manual

1.2 a) In order to get a picture of the course: Read Parts 1 and 2. Skim Part 3 (the Programme) and Parts 4 and 5.

b) In order to set up a course: Reread Part 2. Read thoroughly Part 3 (Programme) and Part 4 (Running the Course). Read Part 6 (Follow-up) to see what other arrangements may be necessary.

c) In order to run a course: Read Part 3 (Programme) to prepare the necessary task instructions and other materials. Read Part 4 with special emphasis on tutors' roles. Read Part 5, checking comprehension of 'Tackle a Task'.

PART 2 - A SUMMARY OF THE COURSE

The Pattern of Learning

2.1. The course deals with skill, and skill is characteristically developed through a cycle of experience and reflection[1]. More precisely in this context, experiment - feedback - reflection, leads to further experiment. This determines the structure of the course.

a) To gain experience, students carry out Tasks (pieces of work, each lasting 30 to 90 minutes, involving action and having an end product). Because the subject dealt with is co-operation, students work in groups (of six to nine people). The subject matter of the task is not critical (for tasks used see Part 3): what matters is the way in which the students work together - though success in carrying out the task is the main indication of effectiveness.

b) Tasks are followed by reviews, in which students recall what happened in the task, discuss what people did that was useful and what was a hindrance, and plan to do better next time round.

c) To improve the quality of feedback, students take turns to act as observer: i.e. to watch their own group at work on a task and give a report during the review.

d) After each review, all the groups come together to form a course meeting. A representative of each group gives a short report on what has been learnt.

The basic structure of the course is thus:

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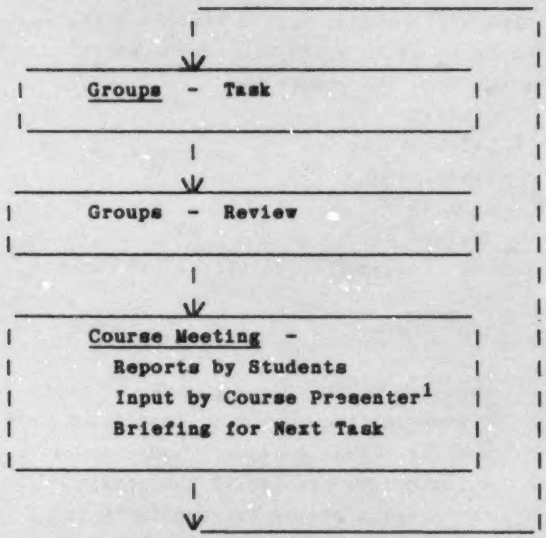
1 Experience, Reflection, Learning FEU 1978



The essence of the course is this repeated sequence of Task and Review. Students quickly realise that though tasks come and go, the group remains in being. This teaches them to look for improvements in working together, irrespective of the task. It is probably the only way of teaching this: the concept is exceedingly difficult to explain in the abstract, and certainly it is pointless to attempt laboured introductions or descriptions of what the course is about. Don't try -let them see for themselves.

It is equally useless to run individual tasks in isolation, since they are only effective as part of a sequence. (This does not apply when students already understand the course methods, e.g. in follow-up work).

Although the aim of the course is the development of individuals, it achieves this (to start with at least) by giving them experience of being part of a strong team.

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1 Terms which may be more familiar in some institutions are: co-ordinator, organiser, tutor, etc.

2.2 Working Method

Groups are provided with a basic working method, called 'Tackle a Task', which they are asked to use throughout the course. Its stages are:

Aims(s)
Information
Plan
Action
Review

(This is discussed in detail in Part 5).

2.3 Length of Course

a) Whenever a group does a task, at least five or six different 'themes' (i.e. aspects of interaction or getting things done) are bound to arise, none of which can be ignored if the group is to progress. The minimum period for dealing with the range of themes is 20 hours (3-4 days). A shorter course may be a waste of time.

b) Provided the first two days are run as a block, the rest of the course may be run at intervals (say, a day a week) particularly where projects or other activities between sessions can reinforce the learning. However, a segmented course needs more time to achieve the same result.

2.4 Sequence and Programme

Any aspect of interaction or getting things done can crop up in any session. For example, from the start of the course, there will be some form of leadership: a group may decide to appoint a leader on Day 1, even though 'leadership' as a theme is not formally raised by the course presenter until Day 3. No attempt should be made to dissuade students from doing this: the group knows what its current needs are, and in this way largely determines its own syllabus. Having said this, the programme can be regarded as modular, in the sense that tasks emphasise different aspects of working

together. The first two days constitute one large module, and the main themes (Tackle a Task, Reviewing and Clarifying Aims) need to be dealt with first, before other topics are introduced. The sequence of later modules can be varied; however the crucial exercise on personal skills (Day 4 - morning) should not be run before students have enough data to make it worthwhile, and enough confidence in the team to be able to comment on each other's performance without giving offence.

Session	Module	Themes Introduced
Day 1	1	(Tackle a Task, Reviewing
Day 2	1 (Cont'd)	(Clarifying Aims
Day 3 (a.m.)	2	Leadership
Day 3 (p.m.)	3	Assumption Breaking
Day 4 (a.m.)	4	Personal Skills
Day 4 (p.m.)	5	Target Setting
	6	Review of Course

In addition there are two optional Modules: Module 7 on Brainstorming, and Module 8 which is a miniature project on the subject of job opportunities. Other themes (such as listening) can be given emphasis whenever the course presenter feels the time is ripe (i.e. students are becoming conscious of the need).

2.5 Roles of Tutors

The course needs at least two staff members, who carry out distinct roles:

a) The Course Presenter whose functions are:
   i) to co-ordinate the progress of groups, decide on tasks and provide materials;
   ii) to preside at course meetings and give short inputs.

b) The Coach (ideally one per group) whose functions are:
   i) to observe the group doing a task;

ii) to help the group to review, by posing appropriate questions and reporting observations. The coach should NEVER help with the task and NEVER advise the students on how to work together. Students must work this out for themselves.

2.6 Special Characteristics

a) The course needs a high staffing ratio - for twenty-four students, at least two staff, preferably four. Students will learn from the course to work on their own initiative, so staff time can be saved during the rest of the year.

b) The course is concerned with discovery, including self-discovery, and this can have a strong emotional impact. Tutors must ensure that this is positive, e.g. by not allowing reviews to concentrate on blame or failure.

c) Both content and learning methods are probably unfamiliar. Staff development is desirable: ideally, tutors should first undergo the course themselves as students. Once the tutor has developed the appropriate skills, however, it will be found that the basic method can be applied across large sections of any vocational preparation syllabus. (See 6.3).

2.7 Checklist for a successful Course

Do

1. Run a programme of at least two full days.
2. Prepare programme and materials in advance.
3. Insist on 'Tackle a Task'.
4. Insist on 'Action'.
5. Make sure observations are specific.
6. Make sure reviews are charted.
7. Keep up a brisk pace.
8. Let students make mistakes.
9. Let students find out for themselves.

Don't

1. Try to explain at great length what the course is about.
2. Run segments in the programme in isolation.
3. Explain the task.
4. Help with the task.
5. Interrupt the task.
6. Allow reviews to dwell on mistakes.
7. Tell the group how to work better together.
8. Try to shape the group after your ideal.

PART 3 - MODEL COURSE PROGRAMME

(Note: As well as defining the aims for each day of the course, specific targets can be set, to judge how successfully the course is running. Suggestions are given below. If targets are achieved, the day has gone well, but it would be an outstanding course that met them all.)

Day 1 Aims

1. To introduce the basic learning method of the course: working in groups and the cycle of task and review.
2. To develop skill in using 'Tackle a Task' in both its 'straight through' and 'cyclical' forms (see 5.2).
3. To introduce the observer's role and give practice in observation.
4. To give practice in reviewing, including making plans to improve the way the group works together.

Day 1 Targets

1. All groups readily took part in tasks and enjoyed them.
   (Measure: not more than one instance per group of low morale and reluctance).
2. All groups carried out reviews.
3. All groups made at least one interactive plan, which they attempted to carry out.
4. Students could remember the stages of 'Tackle a Task'. (Measure: 50% could remember all five stages, not necessarily in order. 75% could remember at least four stages).

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
15	Course Meeting: Introduction	Aims of Course To find and practise good ways of getting work done. To help you find out more about what you're good at. Briefly describe the method of the course: groups, tasks, reviews, coaches, observers. Brief of preparation (below).	Pin up chart and keep for reference in course meeting room. Do not labour the description - students will rapidly understand when they try it.
15	Groups: Preparatory Exercise	In order to get to know people in the group better, make a chart, showing for each member their name, main interest, (and work experience placements).* Brief for Observer o During the task: o Keep quiet. Keep out of action. o Watch what people say or do. Write it down. o When the task is finished: Lead off the review, by telling the group what you observed.	*Modify if 'work experience' does not apply. Explain the term 'chart' (see 4.4). Find volunteer to act as observer (everyone will have a turn). Display observer's brief, so everyone understands the role. Encourage observer to move back from the group.
15	Groups: Task	Choose a name for your group and draw a shield or emblem for it, based on your interests.	Use name throughout the course.

PROGRAMME - DAY 1 (Contd).

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
10	Groups: Review	Proforma review chart What Happened | Plans for Next Time	The pattern of reviews should be 1. Report by observer. 2. Comments by members 3. Additional observations by group tutor. 4. Plans for next time (see 5.6). Stress that though the next task is not yet known, the group can still make plans to regulate its behaviour. Observations and plans should be charted. Remind group that some volunteer must give a short report to the course meeting.
10	Course Meeting	Reports (max. 3 minutes) from groups	Ask for any plans for the future.
15	Course Meeting	How to Tackle a Task o Aims - why? o Information - things you know things you need to find out o Plan - who does what, where, when, how? o Action - do it o Review - is there more to do? what have we learnt?	Introduce 'Tackle a Task' - natural sequence for doing any job. Explain stages, and ask students to try it during the next task. If possible, relate 'Tackle a Task' to points reported by groups.

PROGRAMME - DAY 1 (Contd).

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
30	Groups: Task	Draw on a chart a sketch plan of the college * showing places that new students need to be able to find. Use 'Tackle a Task'. Make notes on the chart provided, of aims, information and plan.	* Or 'nearby shops' etc. Provide a chart with these headings and try to find some student to chart points as they arise in discussion (do not let this hold the group back).
15	Review		
125	Lunch		
10	Course Meeting Reports		
15	Groups Task	Design a paper hat suitable for some occasion that you choose.	Point out that the 'occasion' constitutes the aim, i.e. what the hat is for.
10	Review		
20	Task	Organise yourself into a production line to make paper hats, based on your prototype. At ...(give time e.g. 'at 10.30 make hats') - the production must last 3 minutes.	
20		Review and improve your production line. At ... make more hats - another run of 3 minutes.	
15		Review and improve your production line.	
20		At ... make more hats - another run of 3 minutes. Finally, review the way you worked together and make plans for the next task.	

DAY 1 - (Contd.)

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
35	Groups Task	Convey a short message from (point A to point B). The message will be given to you at (in 30 minutes time). During the transmission stage, no-one may move more than five yards. The message must be sent accurately, as quickly as possible.	Choose points about 200 - 300 yards apart (depending on intervening obstacles), just close enough for the the group to transmit by shouting. Aim (if students ask) 'to improvise a communications system in an emergency'. Learning purposes - planning; creativity (if students hit on a more ingenious way of transmission).
10	Review		
5	Course Meeting	<u>Two Ways of using Tackle a Task</u> 1. Straight through. 2. In cycles.	Demonstrate on chart (See 5.2.2.)
160			

20

Day 2 Aims

1. To give an appreciation of the importance of purpose in determining the scope of a task.
2. To encourage students to think about their life so far and their present aims, both short and long-term.
3. To encourage students to think about their impact on other people.
4. To give further practice in 'Tackle a Task'.

Day 2 Targets

1. Tasks, reviews and interactive plans as for Day 1.
2. Students could remember the stages of 'Tackle a Task'. (Measure 75% could remember all stages, in order: 100% could remember four stages).
3. Students could state the purposes of reviewing.
4. Students could answer the question, 'Why be clear on aims?' (Measure: 90% get something like 'to tell us what to do', or better).

PROGRAMME - DAY 2 MODULE 1 - METHOD AND AIMS (CONTINUED)

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
15	Course Meeting	Recap briefly course aims and methods.	
30	Groups Task	Survey vehicles parked nearby, and list them under suitable headings. Note on a chart any important facts you discover.	Or 'vehicles passing on the main road'. (This will require different aims and information). Learning purpose: to illustrate the importance of aim (i.e. purpose). Terms like 'suitable' and 'important' are meaningless, unless one can say, 'Suitable for what?'
15	Review Break		
15	Course Meeting	Reports. Ask groups what their aims were. - Input - aims: Aim determines information needed:	A key session. Most groups will not have thought seriously about purpose before gathering information. The next input should bring home to them that without a clear purpose, effort can be worthless. Unveil the chart, one line at a time. The message is that the purpose for which the job is being done determines what information is wanted. If your aim is to help the police catch licence-dodgers, the make of car is irrelevant. For a moving vehicle survey (alternative task) appropriate aims would be concerned with road usage and safety, adequacy of public transport, or need for a by-pass. (Each suggests different categories of information.)

Aim	Appropriate Information
1. Advise BL on marketing	British & foreign cars
2. See how well teachers are paid	Rolls-Royces in car parks!
3. See who goes abroad	GB stickers
4. Catch crime	Bald tyres. Expired licence discs.
5. Commit crime	Doors left open. Keys in ignition.

22

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
	Course Meeting (contd.)	W H Y?..... Run this course - To help students learn - To get jobs - To live _____ why else? — To improve performance of British work-force — To make country richer — To earn my salary etc. Contrast 'Why-because'. 'Because' only gives information about the past: e.g. 'because I was sent'. This throws no light on the purpose of the job, and so does not help you decide how it should be done.	Demonstrating: (a) Immediate aim leading to more remote aims. (b) People combining aims to work together. Tutors should devise an aims network which combines realistically their own aims with those of their students.
30	Individual Work	(a) Draw an illustrated map or a flow chart, to show your life so far - successes, difficulties etc. (b) Extend your path - two years ahead then ten years ahead Then till you look back on your whole life.	Purpose: to encourage students to review their life so far as a basis for aim-setting.
30 10	Groups Task Review	Produce a display of plants to suit some purpose the group chooses.	

DAY 2 (Contd.)

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
15	Individual Work	a) Now take something you want to achieve soon. Write it in a box. Ask why? Why? writing down each answer in a box. Connect the boxes. b) Consider anything you have done on this course that might help you achieve your aim. c) In groups: produce a list of aims.	Students are being asked to produce a simple network of their own aims, (on the lines of the example shown above, 'run this course'). In groups: produce a list of aims. Purpose of group list - to encourage students to bear in mind each other's aims/needs. Tutor should point out any way this course can assist in fulfilling aims.
5	Groups		
	Lunch		
165			

DAY 2 (Contd).

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
10	Course Meeting	Input on some appropriate subject (e.g. listening) or reports.	
50	Groups Task	Carry out a survey of what the (local) public thinks about your college. Produce a report that can be passed to the college principal.	Or ... 'thinks about the YTS scheme', or 'thinks would be suitable services for vocational preparation students to provide to the local community'. Insist on a defined purpose (which should indicate what survey questions to ask). Other learning points: planning effect on other people; planning before you go out. Courage and honesty (if anyone is afraid to interview). The task length will be 50 minutes, assuming that the college is 5 minutes from suitable places for interviews, (increase as necessary). Alternative task - [lower risk]. Survey the local shops, to find out what sort of shop is missing which could be opened to make a profit. Produce a list of three possibilities, and choose the best.
30	Review Break	Individually: 1. Remember all the people you interviewed. Jot down short descriptions. 2. What do you think they thought of you? Jot down three good points and three bad points. 3. Compare notes with other members of the group. 4. Then hear from the observer.	e.g. 'old man in a raincoat'.
30 10	Groups Task Review	Produce a poster to show the importance of having clear aims.	
10 140	Course Meeting	Display and explain task results.	

Day 3 Aims

1. To give understanding of the functions and problems of leadership.
2. To illustrate the need to overcome assumed constraints and conventional methods of thought.
3. To give further practice in 'Tackle a Task' and working together.

Day 3 Targets

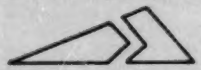
1. Tasks, reviews and process plans as Day 1.
2. Students could note useful points about what a leader should do (Measure: 75% get at least two valid points).
3. Groups are becoming conscious of the need to listen, and to support weaker members. (Measure: at least one instance of each being explicitly commented on.)

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
15	Course Meeting	Individual work a) Write down the stages of 'Tackle a Task', in order. b) Write down the questions you should ask at each stage. Turn over your page c) What are the purposes of reviewing? d) Why be clear on aims?	Looking for both 'to see what we did' and 'to learn for next time'.
35	Groups Task	Design a wrapper or package (picture plus words) for a product of your choice. Make sure the wording specifies what the product is for (aim), gives useful information, and instructions for use (plan).	Point out that even a package or label should follow the stage of 'Tackle a Task'. To simplify the task, make the product a poster, and omit 'instructions for use'.
15	Review Break		
10	Course Meeting	Reports, followed by briefing.	
20	Groups Preparation	For your next task (in 20 minutes) appoint a leader. List on a chart a) What you want your leader to do, to help you do a good job. b) What you want your leader not to do. c) What the group will do to support him/her.	This section is not designed to teach the skills of leadership, but to give an appreciation of what a leader's role and problems are.

DAY 3 (contd.)

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
45	Task	Using the bricks provided, build a tower to make a profit. The rules for working out profit are: o You get paid £1,000 for every inch of height. o You get charged £100 for every brick you use. o You get charged £5,000 for every minute you take, to the nearest half minute, (upwards). o At ... all groups will build at once, in the course meeting room. You have till then for aims, information and planning. Before the action stage, please let the course presenter know what you expect to achieve, in height, number of bricks, time and profit. After building, appoint a new leader and observer. Review, and plan to do better. Build again at ...	Learning purposes - information handling, planning, estimating. Useful stimulus is needed. Materials - Lego (about 80 mixed pieces in bag: make sure groups have the same amount). Tape measures or rulers Timing: Preparation (1) 20 (mins) Build (1) 5 Preparation (2) 15 Build (2) 5 Course presenter should chart estimates and actual results. Course presenter should start groups together, and call out time in ½ minutes. Groups shout 'ready' when complete. Second run is optional (useful to reinforce 'cycling' 'Tackle a Task'). Review questions: What did the leader(s) do? What should they do?
25	Review		Update group's leadership chart.
165	Lunch		Ask how leaders got on. Comment on the need for support from group, if leader is to be effective (in the absence of sanctions).
10	Course Meeting	Groups to display leadership charts and report.	
45	Groups Task	Make a new board game.	Opportunity for another leader.
15	Review		
	Break		

28

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
10	Course Meeting	'The next task is a manufacturing task in a series of runs - like the paper hats task.' The timetable is: Run 1 [in 15 minutes] Run 2 [in 30 minutes] Run 3 [in 45 minutes] Run 4 [in 50 minutes] 'Task briefs and materials will be given out in groups.'	Do not expand on this brief or discuss the nature of the task, or the impact will be lost. Learning purpose - assumption-breaking. Materials needed - for each group, a bag of about 50 cut pieces of lino which can be assembled into triangles, e.g. 
60	Groups Task	Task: Make triangles - increasing output each time. Production will begin with the opening of the bag, and must last two minutes. The only rule is: no damage to the materials in the bag.	There is nothing in the brief to say that the group must use the pieces once only - or indeed that they need use the pieces at all. When any group realises this, their quantitative results improve startlingly (triangles are scribbled, or very rapidly reassembled). Avoid letting groups see or hear other groups working, but let them know the results achieved. (Course presenter should 'chart' a running total.)
15	Review		Bring out assumption-breaking points. There may be accusations of cheating. Point out that cheating means breaking rules. One must not assume that there are rules, just through lack of imagination.
10	Course Meeting	Informal reports.	
165			

Day 4 **Aims**

1. To give students a picture of their own personal skills, and a method of developing them.
2. To give appreciation of the importance of setting stretching, but achievable, targets.
3. To review the course and remind students of topics covered.

Day 4 **Targets**

1. The skills exercise is carried out with care and attention.
   Students are provided with useful and specific data about themselves.
   (Measure: For every student, the group produces at least three separate points.)
2. Students identify worthwhile personal objectives (or skills to develop) and make appropriate plans (Measure: 50%).
3. Statements for sponsors are positive and comprehensive.
   (Measure: at least eight items, referring sensibly to interactive or 'getting things done' skills).

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
10	Course Meeting	Write down the stages of 'Tackle a Task' in order, and the questions you should ask at each stage. Write down two points about what leaders should do to get good support.	
30	Skills Exercise	Write down: what have you done to help your group do a good job? What could you do more?	It is important for students to do this exercise well, and spend time on it (especially the group work). Timing must be flexible. Point out that almost any behaviour can be useful in the right context and can be seen positively or negatively (e.g. co-operativeness/wetness: determination/ pig-headedness). This course is concerned with the positive side: finding things that people do well, that they can use elsewhere. Make sure comments are not damagingly negative.
		Write down for every member of your group, on separate sheets of paper: o What has he/she done to help the group do a good job? o What could he/she do more? Put his/her name at the top, and yours at the bottom. Papers will be exchanged later.	

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
40	Groups - exercise (contd)	Exchange papers. Chart what each person has written about you, and pin it up. Then in turn, get everyone to explain what they mean - with examples.	Coaches must be in attendance to make sure comments are (a) specific and (b) positive. Students are not asked to analyse weaknesses.
15	Break		
	Groups	You should now know more about your own skills. Plan how to use them, in helping your group do a good job.	Students may select either roles (leader, time keeper, etc.) or activities (listening better). If necessary students may share a role (carefully defining who does what).
30	Groups Task	By ..., think up a task for another group. The task should have a sensible purpose, require some action, and take half an hour. Write a brief for the other group. Test your task to make sure it works.	Avoid two groups setting the same task!
30		At ... do a task set by another group.	Course presenter allocates tasks.
15	Review	How did personal plans or roles work? Update them.	
___	Lunch		
170			
___			

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
5	Course Meeting	Briefing for game.	The concept of target setting is needed for the Review of the course (Module 6, and the brainstorming exercise (Module 7, Additional).
25	Groups Game	Rules of 'Ball in Bucket' 1. It is a team game. Individual scores are added together. 2. Each player has six attempts to get the ball into the bucket. 3. Each player may score one or two times only. After you have got two balls in, that is the end of your turn. 4. Each player decides from how far away to throw. For each ball in the bucket, you score as many points as your distance from the bucket (measured in feet). Play the game twice. Each time, report scores to the course presenter.	A soft ball with not much bounce or a table tennis ball causes least havoc. Other materials - small bucket or tin; tape measure or scale marked on floor. Learning point: everyone decides how far away to throw, and so sets his/her own targets. It is useless to set targets too high (no balls go in) or too low (the first two balls go in easily, but few points are scored). On the second run, targets should be more realistic, and the group should be advising individuals on what targets to set.
10	Course Meeting	Review of game. Input on success measures.	Benefit of setting realistic but stretching targets. There is research-based evidence that people who are best at achieving things, set themselves targets that they can reach about one time in three (as in the game). Students should set targets for themselves which are neither unrealistically high nor defeatist.
30	Groups Task	Draw up a check-list (a) of things to do or find out when starting a new job; (b) of ways you can tell that the job is going all right.	Set different check-lists to other groups, e.g.1(a) 'Of things to do and find out when looking for a job that suits you.' (b) 'Of ways you can tell the job does suit you.'

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
			2. (a) 'of things to remember to do when working well together.' (b) 'of ways you can tell you are working well together'.
10	Course Meeting	Reports and compare check-lists.	Point out that lists (b) are like targets, being indicators or measures of success.

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
30	Individually	Choose something you would like to achieve during the next few weeks or months. Write down why you want to achieve it. Use 'Tackle a Task' on it and end up with a plan which you can (and will) carry out. Set targets/success) measures for improvement. [Choose someone in your group to act as your personal observer, to let you know how improvement is taking place].	Explain that this can be either an external achievement (like 'getting a job' or 'building a shed'): OR some sort of personal improvement, like 'being on time for things'. Encourage students to turn round any negative aims (like 'not being late') and make them positive. 'Personal observers' can be useful, but omit if impractical. (e.g. because students attend college on different days).
10	Groups	Tell your group what you are working on, and arrange with your personal observer how and when he/she will give you reports	
30	Task	Draw up a statement of what people have learnt on this course, and what they have enjoyed.	List should be comprehensive rather than agreed.
(OR: 40)		OR - for work-placement students: Draw up a statement for your sponsor, to tell them: o What people can learn from this course o What skills you have which might be useful. o How your sponsor can help you to develop further Display your results at the course meeting.	If the college has a good relationship with a sponsor, a number of variations are possible. (a) Panel Session - students produce questions to ask sponsor's representative (preferably someone senior). (b) Students + sponsor make plans to use what they have learnt back at work.
10	Course Meeting	Review of course: compare groups' lists. Recap of aims and 'themes'.	
160			
(170)			

MODULE 7 (ADDITIONAL) - BRAIN STORMING

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
		Introduction to Brainstorming Method.	(See 5.4.2) Brainstorming is part of Information stage. Ideas when called out must not be evaluated till later. No comments!
		Stages of Brainstorming 1. Purpose - Why is it wanted? 2. Measures of success - how to choose the best idea? 3. Think - 1 minute's silence. 4. Chart ideas. 5. Choose and develop.	
40	Groups Task	Draw up a list of ten different ideas for advertising a bar of chocolate. Choose the best, and produce an advertisement.	Insist on success measures being set.
15	Review		
	Break		
10	Course Meeting	Reports	
40	Groups Task	Convey a short message from point A to point B. The message will be given to you at (in 35 minutes time). During the transmission of this message, no-one may move more than 5 yards, or speak! The message must be transmitted accurately, as quickly as possible, and using as few students as possible. Brainstorm to find the best solution.	Do not re-use this task if groups have already come up with a range of answers. Some possible solutions are, throwing a ball, shooting an arrow, morse, semaphore or other code, series of placards, one big placard plus binoculars, tying message to dog, pulling it on a piece of string, use of telephone, etc.
10	Review		
10	Course Meeting	Reports: compare brainstorming lists.	
135			

MODULE 8 (ADDITIONAL) - PROJECT: JOB SURVEY

TIME	EVENT	EXERCISE & TEXT OF BRIEFS	NOTES FOR TUTORS AND LEARNING POINTS
*	Task and Reviews	1. Identify and classify job opportunities for school/college leavers in the ... area. Prepare a report of your findings 2. Produce helpful literature as careers aids for next year's school leavers. Arrange to get your results sent to local careers offices and schools. Note: Prepare an overall timetable (including reviews and breaks) and agree it with your tutor. You should schedule at least two reviews which should be both task and learning reviews.	This module gives students a chance to carry out a task they may see as actively useful. It is in effect a half-way stage to a project (see 8.3 below). The module can also be used to reinforce the course a few weeks later * Timing is elastic; the exercise could take a whole day, or by the omission of Part 2, only part of a morning. The task can be given as a whole to each group, or divided between them, e.g. on a geographical basis.

PART 4 - RUNNING THE COURSE

4.1 Setting Up The Course

4.1.1 Student Numbers

Groups should consist of from five - nine students. Five is rather few, since one student may dominate the group, while among nine, quieter members may not be heard. A group of nine should have two observers.

The course as set out can be run for any number between Ten (two groups of five) and thirty-six (four groups of nine). A small course risks being dull through lack of contrast: a large course needs tight control, or timings may slip. Twenty-one (three groups of seven) is ideal.

4.1.2 Staffing Levels

To review effectively, students need the support of an adult; it is therefore desirable to have one tutor for each group. However, only one tutor is needed to conduct course meetings, and it is not essential (though it may be helpful) for tutors to remain with their groups throughout the task. They should be present during all process work, particularly the review of personal skills (Day 4, morning programme). (If one tutor has to manage two groups, extend the task time of one group by five minutes, so that the tutor can at least be present at the start of both reviews).

4.1.3 Accommodation

Ideally there should be one large room for course meetings, and separate smaller rooms for each group. One group can use the course meeting room, but it is better if it can have its own territory for charts etc. Groups should be able to work round a table. The course may sometimes be noisy; remoteness is desirable!

4.1.4 Residential Courses

These work well. The advantages are:

a) students, by living together away from home, rapidly form effective teams;

b) enjoyment is high, and the course is remembered as a positive experience;

c) the required staffing levels are easier to come by;

d) course sessions can be reinforced by other activities in the same groups, e.g. making a video film.

4.2 Role of the Course Presenter

It will be recalled that there are two distinct staff roles, that of 'course presenter' and 'coach'. These are discussed below. (In addition students take turns to act as 'observer').

The functions of the course presenter are:

a) to keep an overview of the course, adapting the programme as necessary. The course presenter should arrange for staff meetings to be held at least daily to review progress, check against success measures and plan the next day;

b) to conduct course meetings, commenting on students' reports, giving short explanatory inputs (e.g. on 'Tackle a Task': see Section 5 for other possible material) and briefing for subsequent tasks (except when this can be done more conveniently in groups);

c) to keep groups in step with each other on timing etc. This can present considerable problems, particularly as a course concerned with getting things done needs to be seen to be effective in this respect if it is to have validity;

d) to produce task and other instructions. These should normally be charted (one chart per group) so that they can be pinned up where the whole group can read and refer to them. Avoid verbal briefings (which some students will not take in, and which may lead to discussion, drawing tutors in to the 'deadly sin' of Giving Help);

e) to be responsible for administration and discipline.

One or more staff may combine the functions of course presenter and coach, (see below). If they do, they must keep their behaviour in the two roles distinct. The course presenter may be fairly didactic, whereas coaches give encouragement and support.

4.3 Role of the Coach

4.3.1 The role of the coach is not to teach, but to 'lead from the back.' During the task, he or she will observe, generally in silence: during the review, the observer should report first, followed by comments from students, and the coach should only weigh in to emphasise or expand the points students have made, or to bring out points they have missed. Most of the coach's interventions will be in the form of questions, pressing for greater specificity, whether of observations or plans for the future.

4.3.2 Coaching during the Task

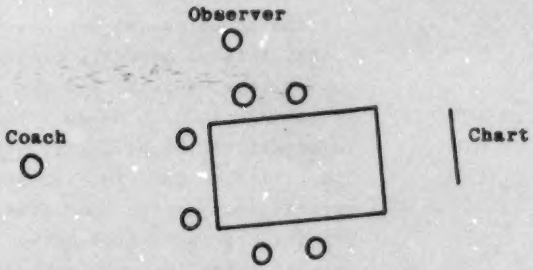
a) At the outset: the coach should present the written brief and then sit down and observe IN SILENCE.

b) The coach should NEVER provide help with the task. If the students ask for materials (other than normal course equipment) point out that it is up to them to beg, borrow or buy whatever they need to fulfil their aims.

c) Task time should be treated as sacrosanct: students have been given a fixed period to complete their objectives, and they should not be interrupted.

d) Positioning the Group

It is important that the group should be placed (preferably round a table) where they can all see the task brief and the chart: the observer and coach should be behind them. A good layout is:



e) Things That Go Wrong

i) If the group is not taking a task seriously, it is usually best not to intervene, but merely to remind them that they are responsible for results. Arrange for task results to be displayed or reported at the course meeting: normally other groups will have produced something worthwhile, and the aberrant group may be abashed. Probably they will have been bored, while more committed groups enjoyed themselves. It may be useful to ensure that for that particular group subsequent tasks spell out stretching targets, e.g. make at least 20 hats. Point out the relationship between low commitment, poor results and dissatisfaction.

ii) If a group finishes a task early, encourage them to hold a task review and improve the result. (See 5.6. on the important distinction between Task and Learning Reviews).

iii) If at the end of task time the group has not finished, it is normally best to stop them, and tell them to review in order to find out why. However if they are heavily committed to a task they see as worth while, it is better to let them take up a few minutes of review time, or to suggest some other time when they can finish.

iv) If the group cannot see how to approach the task, this is normally because they have not established an aim, and the coach should encourage them to do so. If they misconstrue the brief, it may be necessary to pull them up. This should not be done prematurely; often some student will point it out. Before intervening, the coach should check that the students' interpretation is not equally legitimate. If the task wording says 'prepare a report...' the coach may expect a report in writing, but if the students decide it should be oral, it is not acceptable to say 'Oh, but I meant written'. Any constraints must be in the task wording.

4.3.3 Coaching During the Review

a) Observation

As soon as the task is complete, begin the review. Groups should commence with a chart, headed as follows:

What Happened	Plans for Next Time

The review should begin with the observer's report, which provides material for the first column. When the observer has finished, other students should be asked if they have anything to add, followed finally by the group coach.

b) Fact versus Opinion

Encourage students to give observations which are (i) factual and (ii) specific, stating what people actually did or said, together with the effects of this: e.g. 'Brian said, "Did you all hear Karen's suggestion?" The people shut up, and Karen told us we could use scissors, which worked'. Discourage generalised expressions of opinion, like 'Jane was a good leader'; ask 'What did she actually do?'

c) Planning Interaction

When observations have all been recorded, take each of the happenings in turn, and see if something needs to be done about it next time round i.e. either to repeat it, or avoid it. If so, encourage the group to make an appropriate plan, which should be as detailed as possible, answering all the planning questions, who? when? where? how? 'We must watch the time' is not a very

satisfactory plan: a better one says 'as soon as the task is shown to us, Jagdish will break up the time into sections for Aims, Information, Planning and Action. He will record this on a chart, and let us know when the time for each stage is finished! Similarly 'we must appoint a leader' does not get the group very far, unless they tell the leader precisely what is expected of him/her, and what they will do to give support, (e.g. 'the leader will hit the table and say "right!", and then we will all shut up and let her summarise).

The Coach must never plan for the group, but he or she should ask questions, in order to persuade them to be specific: ('So who is actually going to do this, and when should they do it?').

4.4 The Chart

Each group must have available a pad of blank newsprint, about two feet three feet, pinned up where it can be written on and where everyone can see it. Students should be required to chart the stages of the review (observations and plans for next time), and encouraged to chart the stages of the task as well. The benefits are:

a) the chart acts as a focus of attention, so that everyone concentrates on the same point at the same time;

b) decisions and pieces of information are recorded for future reference;

c) with a good chart-writer, comments (especially from quieter members) are not lost in the babble, but are recorded for consideration. A good chart-writer may steer the group and learn effective ways of chairing meetings.

Charting is more expensive than using a blackboard or whiteboard, especially if a commercially produced

'Flipchart' is used, but it has the crucial advantage of providing a permanent record. Charts of reviews should be preserved till the end of the course, preferably displayed on the walls (charts of tasks may be thrown away daily). In less academic groups it may be hard to find anyone to chart and the coach may need to set an example. It is most unwise to criticise spelling on a chart, or students will be discouraged from having a go. (The only exception may be if the chart is to be presented to outsiders, when the group may welcome discreet help).

4.5 Competition

A number of tasks will be treated by students as inter-group competitions. There is no harm in this: it adds to the fun and no individual is likely to feel disheartened by failure. Occasionally a whole team may feel depressed, in which case the course presenter and coach will need to provide encouragement, e.g. by giving them tasks they are likely to do well. It is possible to run the whole course as one cumulative competition, but this does involve subjective marking, which may be seen as unfair.

4.6 Selection and Design of Tasks

4.6.1 Choice of Tasks

The choice of tasks in the programme may need to be modified (some variants are suggested in the text). Factors to consider are:

a) whether the learning purpose and level is appropriate - seldom critical in practice, since students will learn from any task. One point here is that a task whose purpose is unspecified needs different skills from one with its purpose spelt out. 'Design the ideal paper hat' is an aim-setting task, while 'make 50 paper hats for a children's party' requires planned timing;

b) whether the task can work on site: 'Convey a Message' (Day 1) requires space; 'survey' tasks need shops or people nearby; most outdoor tasks need fine weather;

c) the need for variety, e.g. between outdoor and indoor, active and reflective tasks; tasks requiring more or less planning, co-ordination etc.;

d) how well students know the locality, and each other;

e) what similar activities they have done already.

Groups vary in their response to tasks, depending on their mood. All the tasks listed have been found enjoyable: the fact that one group dislikes a task does not mean that others will. Having said that, some tasks (such as the Lego one) are almost always enjoyed, while some reflective tasks are seen as hard work. Note that certain tasks have special roles, e.g. the task on the morning of Day 2 'list under suitable headings ...', which illustrates the importance of clear aims.

4.6.2 Devising Tasks - Some Criteria

a) Tasks must be chosen with a learning aim (e.g. 'to provide practice in gathering information'). They should also have, or at least be capable of having, a realistic purpose: 'for a children's party'.

b) All tasks must have an end-product, and an action stage, even if this is merely a listing on a chart. Pure discussion will not bring out the required issues.

c) Tasks must allow discretion: in selecting a purpose, or in deciding how to achieve it. Tasks that just say 'go to X and do Y and Z' are unlikely to be fruitful.

d) There should not be too many tasks where all the action is carried out by one 'expert' (tasks involving drawing or design are prone to this).

e) During the first couple of days of the course, avoid setting a task which students see as highly important in its own right: otherwise they may concentrate on the task itself rather than the interaction.

4.6.3 Examples of Tasks

a) Posters and Displays

Examples:
i) Design a poster for the Summer Disco.
ii) Make a visual aid to illustrate the hazards of smoking.
iii) Assemble a floral display for a purpose of your choice.

Other possibilities: write the words of a song, make paper sculpture, produce a wrapper, leaflet, etc.

Advantages: flexible: short but easy to make longer.

Disadvantages: one student may do most of the work.

b) Check-lists

Examples: Draw up a check-list ...
- of things to remember before starting a new job.
- of what a good group leader should do.

Advantages: Thought-provoking: can be practically useful (get typed afterwards).

Disadvantages: Not much action. (Literacy levels need assessing.)

c) Surveys

Examples: i) Survey neighbouring shops, and recommend what new shops might be opened to make a profit.

ii) Draw up a sketch-plan, indicating where to eat within five minutes walk.

iii) Survey local public opinion to see what people think of YTS/youth unemployment.

Advantages: Thought-provoking. Can be practically useful. Can be left open (as (iii)), forcing students to define aims in order to decide what questions to ask. Good for planning, judging impact on other people.

Disadvantages: Long action stage. Possible public reactions.

d) Inventions

Examples: Design and make: a board game, new gadget, road sign, etc.

Advantages: Mind-opening, creative.

e) Performing

Examples: i) Produce a television commercial to suit some product or service of your choice.

ii) Write a pop song and perform it with home-made instruments.

Advantages: Creative - need for control and organisation.

Disadvantages: Shyness or rowdiness (better later in course).

1.7 Adapting the Course

With experience, tutors may wish to rework the course material and build their own designs. Some points to consider are:-

a) Before making substantial changes, run at least the first two days more or less as they stand. This ensures that the tutor:

i) understands the course method (from experience), and
ii) has a yardstick to judge the effectiveness of changes

b) The material is linked and cumulative. There is no benefit in taking single exercises and modules and running them in isolation.

c) Modules can generally be removed or substituted. There are two constraints on this:

i) Module 1 must always be run first, to give students a working method and some understanding of aims.

ii) Module 4 (Personal Skills) should be run on Day 3 or 4. If it is introduced too early, students will have no feedback to give one another. If it is too late, students cannot adjust their behaviour in the light of what they have learnt. It is a powerful module, and must not be cut.

4.8 Check-List of Equipment Needed

Essential

Prepared charts for inputs and task briefs.
Chart paper (blank newsprint).
Charting pens - one per student.
Means of attaching charts to wall (masking tape is useful).
Lego - 1 set per group (about 75 pieces each).
Scissors.
Balls (soft) for 'ball in bucket'.

Desirable

Portfolio (for pre-prepared charts).
Notebooks (1 per student).
Staplers.
Oven-timers (useful for encouraging time-consciousness during tasks).

PART 5 - CONTENT OF THE COURSE

5.1 The aim of the course is to help students behave more skilfully. This comes through practice, but it is also a matter of understanding: there are patterns in human behaviour, and rules which skilful people generally follow. These are not of course 'laws', like those of physical science. An eccentrically gifted individual may break most of the rules and get away with it, by flair, personality or intelligence. They do however work, for most people, most of the time. Individual students need to know at least some of the rules, and in the main they should learn them through experience. The tutor needs a wide understanding - particularly because developments in a group cannot be limited to what is on the syllabus that day: any sort of issue can crop up, and the tutor must (a) diagnose what is happening and (b) help the students to understand and learn from it.

The notes below summarise the main outcomes of the course. Their purpose is:

a) To suggest to tutors what to look out for, both on the course and when students try to apply the lessons outside.

b) To provide material for inputs by the course presenter.

For the sake of brevity, the outcomes are set out without argument or supporting evidence; after all, the 'evidence' that matters is that what is described does actually happen: or in the case of prescribed techniques, like 'Tackle a Task'[1], that if they are used they do in fact work.

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1. For a detailed discussion of group training methods, see Training in small groups - A study of 5 methods. Babington Smith and Farrell. Pergamon 1979. Coverdale on management. Max Taylor Heinemann 1979.

The order of this section is:

5.2 The working method: 'Tackle a Task', as a whole.
5.3-5.6 Its individual stages.
5.7-5.10 Other skills - observation, listening etc.

5.2 Working Method - Tackle a Task

5.2.1 The Sequence

In tackling any piece of work, one naturally goes through a series of stages:

Aims - Why are we doing the task? What exactly are we trying to achieve?

Information - What do we know, or need to find out, that is relevant?

Plan - Who does what, when, where and how?

Action - Do it!

Review - a) Have we finished? What else is there to do?

b) How did our plans go? What have we learnt?

This sequence, called 'Tackle a Task', is the working method of the course.

e.g. Task To reorganise our house

Aims - 1) To accommodate the needs of the children as they grow up.
2) To avoid clutter in the hall.

Information - We can spend £500.

- Jane wants her own room.

- Bicycles are propped in the hall.

- The front parlour is never used.

Plan i) - Give parlour to Jane as a bedroom. She will redecorate, given £50 for materials.

ii) - Buy bicycle shed. Me to check price at garden centre on Monday. Alice to check the need for planning consent at Council offices today.

Action - (People carry out plans).

Review - Decoration complete, but results are hideous. (Point learnt for next time: give Jane tactful guidance on aesthetic matters).

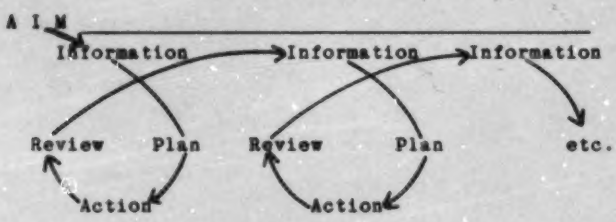
- Cost of shed exceeds available budget (leading on to a new task - that of building a shed instead).

The method can be used on concrete, physical tasks, as above, but also on more abstract ones such as improving skills (see 5.9).

5.2.2 'Cycling' and Risk

a) Sometimes to achieve an aim, one may need to go through the sequence a number of times in the review. The question 'have we finished?' gets the answer 'no', and the review stage leads straight to

the information stage of the next cycle.



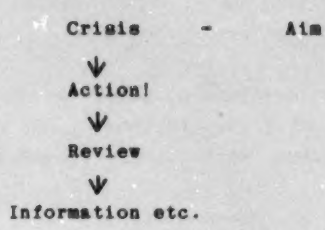
The aim remains unchanged: if it is a long-term one, like 'to paint the Forth Bridge', or 'to lead a good life', it may never be achieved, though one can get closer towards it.

b) This 'cycling' approach is particularly suitable for puzzling or unfamiliar tasks: have a go, review, and so feel one's way towards a result. Its disadvantage is that one may not get the action right first time round. This may or may not be serious: the question to decide is, 'What do I lose if I am wrong?; 'What do I risk?'

If I am furnishing a room and buy a sofa of the wrong colour, the loss is small - the shop may take it back. Putting on wallpaper involves a higher risk since, if the colour turns out to be wrong, I cannot pull it off again.

This concept of <u>risk</u> is of great practical importance. If the risk is high, e.g. in a job interview, every opportunity should be taken to reduce it, by thoroughness in assembling information and planning.

c) The cycle may start at any stage. In a crisis, one may start with an action, then review and think what to do next. A sudden stimulus (a cry of 'Fire!', or even 'There's a pub around the corner') may constitute aim, information and plan, all in one.



5.2.3 As well as being a working method, 'Tackle a Task' is valuable for diagnosis. One may, for instance, observe that people are trying to make plans without having agreed on an aim, and that this is the cause of dissension. Pointing it out can help them forward.

5.3 Aims

Note: Terminology on aims has not been generally standardised.
'Aim(s)' is used here as a generic term, including both 'Purpose' (why the job is being done) and 'Target' (what exactly is wanted, and how it can be measured or assessed).

5.3.1 Purpose

a) Asking Why

The key to understanding a task is to ask its purpose, i.e. to ask why it is being done. The answer will be in the form 'in order to ...', not in the form 'because ...', 'because I was told to' tells you nothing about what the task is for. Without knowing the purpose, it is very hard to use any initiative. If someone says 'fetch me a spanner', what can one do if the spanner isn't there? (If one knows what the spanner is for, it may be obvious that pliers would do instead.)

b) Short-and Long-Term Purposes

Beyond the immediate purpose, there is usually a range of longer-term purposes. One can discover them by asking 'why?','why?' repeatedly.

Fetch a spanner - why?
In order to fit a wheel - why?
in order to make a car - why?
in order to sell it - why?
in order to make money for the company - why?
in order to pay my wages, etc. etc.

This is an important technique for relating immediate action to long-term ambitions. (See Programme - Day 2).

c) Reconciling Purposes

i) Most tasks have more than one purpose: people do a job not merely to earn their wages but also in order to use their skills, and to meet other people. Moreover, beside the individual's purposes, there are corporate purposes (making a profit), and personal purposes of other workers involved. Most of the time in employment, these various aims are more or less reconciled (or no work would get done). (See Programme Day 2 - 'Run the Course'...).

5.3.2 Targets

When faced with an unfamiliar task or one that is loosely defined, it is useful to specify targets by which one can tell that the work is on course, or that success has been achieved. This is particularly valuable in projects of self-improvement, like 'improving my punctuality', or 'learning to listen better'. There is evidence that setting a target (like 'not being late more than once

next week'), to which one is committed, may itself be enough to secure improvement. Since this is an important part of the course method, tutors are invited to try it for themselves.

Targets can take various forms:

a) A defined end product: 'I'll have got there when .. (I have produced a typed report, at least 20 pages long, covering the following points').

b) Progress measures, e.g. half-way by half-time;

c) Indirect indicators or 'dipsticks'. 'One sign that discipline has improved will be that I do not have to shout at a student more than twice in any day! 'I shall be satisfied with my coaching if our team wins three of the first four matches'.

To be effective, targets need to be possible but stretching. There is some evidence that high achievers habitually set themselves targets which they hit about one time in three. (A lower target is not stretching, whereas a higher target is an invitation to failure.)

In the programme, targets are suggested for each day of the course, as well as for the course as a whole.

5.3.3 Commitment

Apart from being one of the keys to developing personal skill (see 5.9), Commitment is an important factor in group activity. Sometimes students will be apathetic or bored with a task, and the cause will need to be discussed. The main factors are:

People become committed to an activity when:

i) they understand (better still, share) the aims; and

ii) they take part in making the plans (no one likes carrying out someone else's orders blindly);

iii) they decide to try. (Commitment is largely in one's own control; those who make an effort are likely both to enjoy the task and do it successfully);

iv) others around them are keen (commitment or apathy are highly infectious);

v) they get into action (indecision is a great breeder of discontent: action (even the wrong action) relieves tension, and may indicate the right way forward);

People lose commitment when:

i) their suggestions or contributions are disregarded;

ii) much effort brings little reward, e.g. they always come last.

5.4 Information

5.4.1 Types of Information

When one is clear on aims, the next stage is to assemble all the information that is relevant. This can be of the following kinds:

a) Information known: this includes the facts of the situation, and also:

i) Experience, and principles derived from it i.e. When did we meet this task or something like it before? What was helpful then?

ii) Ideas for tackling the task.

b) Information needed (which must be got now) before plans can be made.

c) Risk (see 5.2.2. above).

5.4.2 Ideas and Problems

Ideas are information: something we could do if we choose. As soon as they are definitely adopted, they become part of the plan.

Not all tasks (even difficult ones) need an 'idea', in the sense of an exciting revelation. More often than not, once one knows the aim and has assembled the information, the way forward is obvious. The difficulty lies in finding time or energy, or getting others to co-operate, rather than in any sort of intellectual puzzle.

There are however two kinds of case where a creative, idea-seeking approach may be needed:

i) Where it is essential to have the best possible result (rather than an adequate result, quickly and cheaply). Even then if the risk is low (see 5.2.2.) it may be better to get into action, get some sort of a result and then improve it, rather than spend time solution-hunting.

ii) When there is no apparent way forward i.e. there is a genuine 'problem'. In such cases, ideas need to be sought systematically.

There are two approaches:

1) To take the first idea that comes up, work on it and improve it.

2) Some kind of 'brainstorming' approach: one procedure for doing this will be found in the programme (module 7).

The brainstorming approach should be tried - particularly by young people, who may be too little inclined to consider alternatives. It does however have drawbacks in practice. First, it takes time; secondly, it needs a certain amount of formality, which can be difficult to arrange at a work place. Thirdly, in order to select the best idea, a group needs to set criteria in advance (to prevent everyone favouring their own), and this is intellectually demanding. Finally it does not necessarily produce a better result. Method (i) can be quite as effective, but to be successful in a group it needs the skills of 'positive thinking' and 'support' (see the following sections).

5.5 Planning

There are two stages of planning: first, setting out the basic approach; secondly, filling in the detail. In a job of any complexity they should be kept distinct, but at the level of this course it is hardly necessary.

The essence of planning is detail. The points that need to be specified are - Who has to do what, how, where, and when?

In a group, 'who' is the most important: unless some individual accepts responsibility, the thing will probably not be done. A group plan for the Lego task might be: 'Jackie, Asha and John assemble: Michael fits the assemblies together and builds the tower. Trevor holds steady and Yvonne counts the bricks, checks the height, and also co-ordinates.'

One good way to make a plan is by volunteering, allowing individuals to suggest their own how, when and where, subject to a need for co-ordination. Volunteers are likely to know that they can do the job, and be committed to succeeding.
(For plans to improve the groups' working, see 4.3.3. - Coaching during the review. For plans to improve skills,

see 5.9. - Personal Skills).

5.6 Action

Action is the sole purpose of the other stages: without it they are so much time wasted. It must be made clear to students that the best aim-setting and planning in the world is valueless if the task does not get done.

It is often in the action stage that the least academic members contribute towards the group. Their part should not be underestimated.

Some skills of the Action Stage are:

i) getting oneself and other people into action (a key skill);

ii) time monitoring;

iii) leading by example, e.g. doing the boring job that everyone else avoids;

iv) co-operating and conforming - a difficult skill for individualists.

5.7 Review

When a task is complete, a review should be held, in order to see:

a) whether the task is finished, and purposes and targets measures met. If not, what more there is to do? (This is known as the 'Task Review');

b) what happened, and what can be learnt from it. (This is known as the 'Learning Review').

Since reviewing is the essential method of the course, students should learn to distinguish the two kinds of review.

5.7.1 Task Review

Task reviews are an important part of cycling tasks, like 'paper hats', (Day 1) and Lego and 'triangles' (Day 3). Also whenever students finish a task early and have task time to use up, they should be encouraged to carry out a task review and see if they can improve results. (They may object to this, but reviewing to improve quality is an important practice.) If there is more work to be done, the task review leads directly into the information stage of the next cycle. (Clearly the aim remains constant.)

5.7.2 Learning Review

In the learning review, the information gathered is similar, but it is processed in a different way. The questions to be asked are:

a) How did our plans work? What went right and what went wrong?

b) What were the causes of success and failure? leading to:

c) How can we plan to repeat the successes and avoid the errors, next time round?

This, the learning pattern of the course, can itself be seen to be following the stages of 'Tackle a Task':

Action (Doing a Task)

leads to

Learning Review

providing

Information (We all talked at once)

leading to

Plans (Make Jane chairman, to keep us in order).

leading to

Action (the next task) -

The Aim (Learning) remaining constant.

5.8 Observation

On this course, the skill of observation needs great emphasis. Together with listening, it is the main way of receiving feedback about the effect of one's own behaviour, and is therefore the key to learning almost any skill. Students usually find acting as observer a valuable experience. They should be encouraged to observe particularly their own effect on other people. What does (a balding, middle-aged manager) think when he sees me? How can I tell his reaction? How can I tell what aspect of me he is reacting to?

5.9 Personal Skills

5.9.1 The Team

A team is built out of the skills of its members: including both technical or task skills, and the skills of interaction. Invariably in any small group, even the least gifted has something to contribute, and it gives a great stimulus to those who have been undervalued in the past, if their skills are recognised. Since interactive skills (or practical skills) are not the same as classroom ability, the less academically inclined are likely to discover new talents.

5.9.2 Almost all forms of behaviour can be made to be useful in the right context: the vice of pig-headedness becomes the virtue of tenacity; feebleness can be a readiness to

co-operate; aggression is an aspect of determination. Students should be encouraged to look for the reverse side of negative qualities.

It is often both easier and more useful to develop a skill, than to overcome a weakness; (if a craftsman is skilful enough, it may not matter that he is vague about time: other people can remind him). Young people have spent 16 years or so having their weaknesses pointed out to them: the course should aim to correct the balance.

5.9.3 Developing Personal Skills

This is in effect the purpose of the course. Some improvement will come simply from the experience - students realise (slowly or suddenly) that particular sorts of behaviour do or do not work, and change their ways accordingly. However if they apply a deliberate scheme (like 'Tackle A Task') they are likely to develop faster, as well as having a method to use in future.

The starting points are a stimulus and commitment to improve. One precondition is a belief that improvement is possible. Experience of the course should provide this, and accordingly the self-improvement exercise is run on Day 4 as part of the course review.

An example of 'Tackle a Task' used on personal behaviour is given below:

Task: Be more Punctual

Aims:	Why?	Why?
Be more punctual	Get to work on time	Keep my job
	Be on time for meals	Stop hassle at home
	Be on time with friends	Stop being left waiting at Bus Stop

Targets: Not be more than five minutes late any day next week. Be on time or early at least three days. Have no rows about lateness at home.

Information: I never get up on time in the morning.
I always have three pieces of toast at breakfast.

I don't always hear the alarm.
Mrs. Jones says I'll be sacked if I don't improve, and my Mum says the same.
In my family, only my younger brother gets up early.

Plan:

* Tackle getting to work first.
* Get my brother to wake me at 7.30. Pay him 50p a week to bring me tea.
* Set the alarm for 7.50 to stop me going to sleep again.
* Always put the toast on before the weather forecast.
* Set the oven-timer at 20 minutes from 8 o'clock; stop breakfast when it goes off.

Review on Saturday to see if plans have worked.

5.10 Speaking and Listening

a) Groups start off the course making a good deal of random noise: about the third day, they begin to notice the need to listen, and at that time an input on speaking or listening may be appropriate.

b) Rules for Speaking

Speaking in a group is a matter of conciseness, timing and relevance. Contributions need to be relevant

- o to the aim
- o to the stage of 'Tackle a Task' (It is no good proposing plans before the aim has been settled)
- o to the last remark.

Contributions should also be positive, and designed to help the group forward, unless that is, one is convinced that they are heading for a precipice.

c) Listening

- o Listening is an important skill, and needs effort. One sign that people really are listening is that there is an appreciable pause before anyone else speaks (an immediate reply suggests that the respondent had not been listening at all - just waiting for the other fool to finish).

- o Listening implies respect for whoever is talking - expectation that what they say is worth waiting for. (The counterpart is that if one habitually makes inane remarks, no one listens.)

- o To listen effectively one needs to be alert for what is useful in other people's remarks, and capable of being developed - not merely for weaknesses to shoot down. When an idea is shot down, creative thinking stops. If on the contrary one says 'yes, so in that case we need to ...' one concentrates peoples' minds on improving the suggestion, so that even a foolish idea can be made fruitful. With a really good group, one can find half a dozen contributions in a row, each developing an idea and pushing it forward towards action.

- o A useful practice to help listening is checking back: repeating, in other words, what the speaker has said.

- o A skill young people need is being prepared to ask for information - something shyness or pride often discourages.

5.11 Keeping Positive

As well as being an attitude of mind, positive thinking is a skill of receiving information. It consists of identifying what is right or useful, rather than merely what is wrong - to spot opportunities as well as hazards. This is not easy, because people naturally observe contrast, like white or black: they tend to see what conflicts with their expection, and to regard any discrepancy as a sign of error: 'That's not my idea of a ... whatever'.

It is not suggested that flaws should be ignored, but that positive factors should be given far more weight than they usually are. This is particularly important in reviews, where a group will learn more rapidly from success than failures: success provides a pattern to follow next time, while failure merely indicates what to avoid: there may be a hundred and one other wrong answers. Moreover concentration on error has a destructive effect on morale, while reviewing success has a strengthening effect.

Tutors should avoid themselves dwelling on mistakes that groups make, and do all they can to discourage recrimination. Normally the only times they need to point out mistakes are (i) in matters of discipline and (ii) when a group are complacently deceiving themselves.

PART 6 - FOLLOW-UP: APPLYING AND REINFORCING THE COURSE

A four day course can do only so much towards developing skill, since time is needed for practice and consolidation. It is crucial that when students have finished the course they are encouraged to use what they have learnt. If they use it, it is reinforced and remains; if they do not, any learning will fade over the next few months. Since these skills are part of the 'common core' of human activity generally, there are many ways in which the training can be built up on.

6.1 Individual Follow-up

Staff, (whether in college, careers or personnel departments) can help students by discussing with them (singly or in small groups), actual tasks they are involved with, or things they want to achieve, using 'Tackle a Task' to structure the discussion. What is the student trying to achieve? What are the relevant facts? What information is needed? What are the human factors, the attitude of other people involved? What is the plan and when can action start? (Why not now?) The tutor should adopt a role which involves questioning to thinking rather than offering solutions.

6.2 Follow-up at Work

For some students, application will be mostly at work. It is important therefore that the support of employers or sponsors should be sought, and that they should be told what the course is about. A sample letter to a sponsor is set out in Appendix 3. Some may be willing to become closely involved: those with a number of students may be encouraged to send representatives to attend on the last day and help the students with back-at-work planning, or sit on a panel to answer questions.

6.3 Projects

Full-time students may have less opportunity to put their skills into practice. For them in particular, it is

desirable that some sort of assignment or project should be devised, on the following lines:

a) The project should be seen to be useful (to the students or others), and have a result that can be assessed or measured.

b) It should involve relations with other people, i.e. be carried out by teams or have dealings with customers etc.

c) It should allow the student a fair amount of discretion on the methods to be chosen.

d) It should allow the student to see results within a relatively short time, say a month.

e) Students should be encouraged to use the course learning (Aims, 'Tackle a Task', etc.) in a fairly formal way, and to have regular task and process reviews.

Suggestions for projects: work around the college (creation of classroom base, production of play/musical); services (catering, car washing etc.); work for old people, disabled, etc; work in connection with particular local events (e.g. building floats for a carnival).

6.4 The applications of this course

6.4.1 The short course described in this document has been designed primarily to reinforce pre-vocational core curricula such as that developed elsewhere by the FEU[1], the Joint Board for Pre-Vocational Education,[2] Manpower Services Commission.[3]

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1 FEU : Vocational Preparation 1981

2 JBPVE : The Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education (consultative document) 1984

3 MSC : Core Skills in YTS 1984

6.4.2 If the package were to be used, for instance, as an aid to learning for students following a course leading to a Certificate of Pre-Vocational Education, the basics described in this course programme could contribute to the provision of learning experiences connected with a number of core aims[1]; for example:

(The course should provide opportunities for the young person to)

Creative development

develop his/her awareness of self, others, and groups in their societal context, and of the creative interaction between them (Objective 1.2)

develop his/her ability to work creatively with others on a collaborative project (Objective 1.4)

develop a feeling for and a sense and quality of, an object (Objective 3.1)

be able to relate creative experiences in a college/working environment to the wider world of industry (Objective 3.4)

Problem solving

demonstrate the process of planning an event or course of action (Objective 1.4) by a sequence such as

i) demonstrating an understanding of the nature of the event to be planned

ii) establishing objectives

iii) collecting relevant information

iv) identifying various strategies and predicting their likely outcomes, making logical deductions and assessing implications at appropriate stages

1 See Appendix B to JBPVE Consultative Document.

v) choosing and implementing a plan, monitoring and adapting it to circumstances as appropriate

vi) evaluating the effectiveness of the overall plan and own individual contributions, and identifying lessons to be learned

Communication

listen and respond appropriately to oral requests and presentations, and identify points relevant to a particular purpose (Objective 1.1)

talk in a controlled and effective way appropriate to a range of situations, roles and relationships (Objective 1.5)

Social Skills

participate in a variety of ways in group tasks (Objective 1.1)

evaluate the responses of others to his/her performance, behaviour, personality (Objective 1.2)

adopt behaviours appropriate to his/her own goals in a variety of situations, taking contemporary social conventions into consideration, e.g. use assertive strategies appropriately, express positive feelings, choose when to use and when to avoid behaviour that may give rise to negative reactions (Objective 1.10)

Personal and Career Development

increase his/her awareness of personal characteristics, preferences, qualifications, capabilities (Objective 1.1), in terms of

abilities - social, physical, intellectual, etc. (Objective 1.1.1)

factors influencing these abilities - social, cultural, sexual (Objective 1.1.2)

take responsibility for developing the above qualities (Objective 1.2)

check his/her self-image against the perception of others (Objective 1.3)

develop self-awareness in a range of settings (familiar and unfamiliar) involving practical activity (Objective 1.5)

Such an exercise can of course become purely mechanistic if taken to extremes , but the list here demonstrates how group work on tasks can present a wide range of learning experiences across the core curriculum.

6.4.3 The course is based on techniques initially designed for groups and with adults and, with suitable adaption, it can be used to complement general and specific curricula across a wide age range and at all levels of ability. (See note on para. 5.1.)

PART 7 - EVALUATION

(Measures for evaluating each individual day of the course will be found in Part 3).

7.1 In the end, the success of the course must be judged in terms of the students' subsequent behaviour, and what use they make of the training. This is easiest to see at work, and for students who are employed, the best measure of success is the observation of their employer or supervisor (and of students themselves), on how their behaviour has changed. Where relations are close, an employer may be induced to suggest specific targets in advance of the course, perhaps marking stages in the students' development towards what would be expected of an adult employee, e.g. 'Target: Ann should be competent to tidy and lock up the canteen on her own'.

7.2 Full-time students will find it harder to apply their skills in strictly 'academic' activities although study skills and information gathering aspects of the course will be helped. Active project work will give them scope, and targets can be set related to this (e.g. 'The group successfully organise themselves to visit M's works, and come back with appropriate information').

7.3 Some straightforward measures can be set for students' retention of learning and attempts to apply it. The following may be appropriate for about two weeks after the course:

- Students can remember 'Tackle a Task' (Measure 75%). Some students in employment, or involved with projects, claim to have used 'Tackle a Task' deliberately (Measure 25%). (The technique may well be affecting the behaviour of others even though they do not consciously use it.)

- Students can report ways in which the course has affected them. (Measure: 50% report some change, or some attempt to use a technique).

7.4 As well as setting targets for learning, it is possible to set interim measures to judge the success of the course which it is running.

Some examples are given below. If measures are achieved, the day has gone well, but it would be an outstanding course that met all the targets.

Day 1:
- o All groups readily took part in tasks and enjoyed them.
  (Measure: not more than one instance per group of low morale and reluctance).
- o All groups carried out reviews.
- o All groups made at least one interactive plan, which they attempted to carry out.
- o Students could remember the stages of 'Tackle a Task'
  (Measures: 50% could remember all five stages, not necessarily in order. 75% could remember at least four stages).

Day 2:
- o Tasks and reviews and interactive plans as for Day 1.
- o Students could remember the stages of 'Tackle a Task'
  (Measure: 75% could remember all stages, in order: 100% could remember four stages).
- o Students could state the purposes of reviewing.
  (Measure: 75% get either 'to tell us what to do next time', or 'to show us what we learnt': 50% get both).
- o Students could answer the question 'why be clear on aims?'.
  (Measure : 90% get something like 'to tell us what to do', or better).

Day 3:
- o Tasks, reviews and process plans as Day 1.
- o Students could note useful points about what a leader should do.
  (Measure : 75% get at least two valid points).
- o Groups have become conscious of the need to listen, and to support weaker members.

(Measure: at least one instance of each being explicitly commented on).

- o The skills exercise is carried out with care and attention.

- o Students are provided with useful and specific data about themselves.
  (Measure: For every student the group produce at least three separate points.
- o Students succesefully follow the brain-storming method.
  (Measure: at least five suggestions for the 'bar of chocolate' task, and three for the 'message').

Whole Course

- o Students identify worthwhile personal objectives (skills to develop) and make appropriate plans (Measure: 50%).
  Statements for sponsors are positive and comprehensive.
  (Measure: at least eight items, referring sensibly to interactive 'getting things done' skills).

APPENDIX 1 - DEVELOPMENT OF THE COURSE AND FIRST RESULTS

1. The training course was developed at Thurrock Technical College, in a series of programmes for vocational preparation students, and subsequently tested at Southend College of Technology. The courses included both full-time (City and Guilds 365) and part-time YTS students. Four out of six were residential.

2. Some personal observations by tutors

(i) From Thurrock

The following general points were noted:

a) The level of enjoyment has been high.

b) Students of all levels of ability can understand the concepts and take a full part in the training. Even the lowest ability students joined in enthusiastically and gradually came to realise that in a working group all members have something to offer. This is also a great confidence booster.

c) Groups become noticeably more efficient as the course progresses. The students work together and use abilities of others within the group to increase productivity.

d) The students speak out more. They begin to realise that without accurate information they cannot perform required tasks. They ask for additional information where required, instead of 'plodding on' regardless.

e) Personal awareness increases: individuals actually begin to realise that certain behaviour patterns are not acceptable. Students become aware of arrogance, immature behaviour, failure to listen, etc., and make concentrated efforts to change their behaviour.

f) The residential courses have been particularly successful. As the residential week progresses students need less supervision.

Competitive spirit increases and with it interest and commitment to the group. The members tend not to ignore introvert students and encourage them to participate.

Tutors from Thurrock added some hints for running the course.

a). Students should be given a log book to record work done throughout the course. Time must be allowed within the programme for students to complete these under guidance of the coach. It is useful to have the students record each task and the review chart at the end of each review session.

b). The coaches felt more sessions should be included on interpersonal skills and the contribution of individuals to the group. The programme is flexible enough to allow this and it would be the responsibility of the course director to adapt the programme if he/she considered it necessary.

c). Any competitive element introduced must be carefully controlled and a 'scoring' system worked out. If care is not taken, students who are 'losing' become despondent and motivation to continue doing tasks is lost. If it is done well, interest is maintained and commitment to the group increases. The stronger members encourage more introvert students.

d). If the course is to be used with YTS students, an introductory day prior to the residential would be useful. The trainees should do a 'job analysis' of their role in the company they work for, this can then be used during the course when discussing how process skills can help individuals in their work place. This could also enable the Course

Director to adapt tasks to be job specific or with a vocational bias (for use with CPVE).

e). All groups made a video film on a subject of their choice. They used the skills learnt during the course and obtained great enjoyment from this exercise.

(ii) From Southend

Getting Things Done is concerned with the development and recognition of learning processes which we use unthinkingly. The programme seeks to structure and reinforce those learning processes (FEU Basic Skills, Appendix 8, para 10), through experientially based tasks.

Some practical hints, based on experience of the programme:

1. Initially we felt anxious, i.e. 'I'm not teaching'. Don't worry, it soon passes: the students are learning.

2. Follow the tasks in the manual. If you see the tasks as silly, then your students will too - be patient, adopt a positive approach, the students will trust your judgement.

3. As you and they gain in confidence, you can adapt the tasks to suit a particular situation, but not early on in the programme.

4. The programme is best conducted in a different environment from the group's regular classroom.

5. Appreciate the respect that young people have for each other as talents and abilities emerge during the course. They discover qualities unknown to you and themselves.

6. Do use 'Tackle a Task' in your normal teaching programme, where you think it appropriate; it is very adaptable.

My staff team found it a demanding and rewarding experience for the students. I doubt if they (the staff) will ever forget it, and can we honestly say that of much of our teaching?

3. After one course, students themselves organised a review session and produced a report. Some quotes were:

* 'At work I've learnt to ask questions. I never used to before. If I couldn't do it I used to keep trying instead of asking.'

* 'I used it ('Tackle a Task') cutting mirrors ... I thought of ways to bring the machine backwards and forwards faster, without the glass splintering. I sat down and worked it out, then tried it out on scraps of glass. I used to cut 56 sheets an hour, but now its gone up to 64 ...'.

* 'I left that job (panel beating). I saw on the course I was one of the leaders, even though I haven't got decent CSEs, and I thought, this job won't get me far. So I got them to shift my work placement to an insurance office, and I'm now on to writing out cover notes, and I'm going to be a salesman. Can I interest you in our new ... policy?

APPENDIX 2

WHAT EMPLOYERS VALUE IN YOUNG PEOPLE

Section 2 of the FEU publication Basic Skills (1982) quotes the following list of what employers value in young people (from Industrial Training Research Unit A to Z Study (A types) 1979):

VERSATILITY
TAKES INITIATIVE
PRIDE IN JOB
GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS
LISTENS TO INSTRUCTIONS
WIDE VIEWPOINT
SEEKS WORK WHEN SLACK
QUALITY CONSCIOUS
GOOD TIME KEEPER
ASKS QUESTIONS
METHODICAL AND NEAT
REPORTS FAULTS
REMEDIES THE PROBLEM

With the possible exception of 'wide viewpoint', these are all either dealt with on the course, or derive from skills which the course encourages. For example, 'Takes Initiative' is partly a function of motivation (which it is up to the employer to encourage) but also requires the skills of aiming (what is wanted?) and of working methodically. Quality consciousness is very much a function of reviewing in order to improve.

Basic Skills goes on to say (p.12) :

'To ensure that young peop[illegible] re at least given the opportunity to acquire these skills, [illegible]ppears necessary to:

i) explicitly design them into the curriculum;

ii) raise the awareness of the teachers concerned to the importance of including these skills;

iii) encourage the teaching and learning of these skills by

a) illustrating that certain strategies, e.g. the setting of targets, outcomes, assignments, and team working can be more effective than others;

b) devising methods of assessment ...'

APPENDIX 3

LETTER TO EMPLOYER OR SPONSOR

Dear

Course for YTS Trainees (..... Scheme)

I am writing to let you know about the course that will be run on .....at ..... With your understanding and help, the students will both learn more, and be more effective at work.

The course is designed to develop the skills of co-operation and 'getting things done'.

It is based on methods which have been used for many years in training managers. The students work in small groups, on short 'tasks' (lasting half an hour or so). Each task is followed by a review, in which students examine how they did and plan to do better next time.

As a result of the course, students should improve in some of these ways:

i) being ready to speak up more, and ask if they get stuck;

ii) thinking before rushing into action;

iii) having a better idea of team-work and helpfulness generally;

iv) being quicker to learn, not only from their mistakes but from what goes well;

v) being ready to take responsibility;

We hope you will be able to help by :

i) Before the course: letting each student know how he or she is getting on, what they are good at and where

improvement is needed. [Omit this sentence if students are only just starting work].

ii) After the course, encouraging them to use what they have learnt by:

- o asking them what they have learnt that might be useful (any ideas about their work);
- o asking what they have found out about themselves (any skills they would like a chance to use, or ways in which they mean to improve);
- o being patient if they ask 'why?' when you give them instructions! (one of the things they learn is that to do a good job one needs to understand what it is wanted for);
- o trying them out with a bit more responsibility; they may be keen to have a go;
- o suggesting that if they get stuck, they use 'Tackle a Task': this is a simple way of tackling a piece of work and means:

  a) being sure why you are doing it
  b) getting together information
  c) making plans
  d) doing the job
  e) checking to see what more needs doing (and what has been learnt).

Please contact us if you have any queries about the nature or content of the course; we should be pleased to discuss it with you. We should be very grateful to hear from you whether following the course you notice any development of the students' approach to or understanding of their role at work.

Yours sincerely,

CHECK-LIST FOR A SUCCESSFUL COURSE

Do:

1. Run a programme of at least two full days.
2. Prepare programme and materials in advance.
3. Insist on 'Tackle a Task'.
4. Insist on 'Action'.
5. Make sure observations are specific.
6. Make sure reviews are charted.
7. Keep up a brisk pace.
8. Let students make mistakes.
9. Let students find out for themselves.

Don't

1. Try to explain at great length what the course is about.
2. Run segments in the programme in isolation.
3. Explain the task.
4. Help with the task.
5. Interrupt the task.
6. Allow reviews to dwell on mistakes.
7. Try to shape the group after your ideal.

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Objectives

The objects for which **The Further Education Unit (FEU)** is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:
a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;
b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvements can be effected;
c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;
d) to disseminate and publish information and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.

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